

## **Agenda Item 3 (Items carried over from LENDF meeting 12 Feb 2024)**

### **3a. New consultation on borough-wide travel plans.**

*“A draft ‘Travel Plan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)’ was made available by Wigan Council for public consultation (8 February until **21 March 2024**). Feedback is to be used to inform a final version of the SPD, which we plan to put forward for formal adoption during 2024.”*

Graham will ask [planningpolicy@wigan.gov.uk](mailto:planningpolicy@wigan.gov.uk) for a summary of comments made (anonymised if necessary) for review at the next **Local Traffic and Transport Plans for Lowton and Golborne (LTTPLG)** to be held mid-2024. This is considered essential information for upcoming discussions between Wigan Council officers and the Lowton and Golborne Community Groups in respect of the Wigan Local Plan.

- The community do need to ensure that the Wigan Council enforce a rigorous Travel Plan policy from now on. Previously many of the earlier plans were never enforced even though there was a requirement to do so.

### **3b. Feedback from LaGTAC ‘LTTPLG’ Teams meeting 9<sup>th</sup> Jan 2024 chaired by Andy Burnham**

In 2021 Andy Burnham supported and promoted the formation of a mayoral-backed Working Group to consider ‘Local Traffic and Transport Plans for Lowton and Golborne (LTTPLG)’ via LaGTAC and LHSRG (environment issues).

- Both Andy Burnham and local MP James Grundy stated that it is important for the local communities of Lowton and Golborne to have a key role in the development of plans and strategy since they were the ones with local knowledge.

At the last meeting (09 Jan 2024), it was noted that significant events had recently taken place in relation to potential funding towards the Atherleigh Way Bypass extension; and the upcoming ‘Wigan Local Plan’ consultations scheduled for early to mid-2024.

- There was urgency to discuss many interactive and common issues for any local traffic and integrated transport plan for Lowton and Golborne.

Andy Burham indicated that priority issues are seen to be:

- (i) Golborne Station,
- (ii) The completion of the Atherleigh Bypass Extension to the M6 at Junction 22. These were the key plans that will mainly influence the Lowton and Golborne traffic.
- (iii) However, it is essential that we move forward on all fronts that will impact on traffic and transport infrastructure via various Network Reviews and agreed plans and strategy (Wigan Council and TfGM).
- (iv) Conversations between Wigan Council and the community are urgently needed to feed into the various traffic and transport reviews which are ongoing. A local plan specifically for Lowton and Golborne is key to moving forward utilising the local knowledge of the community.

GW (LaGTAC) was asked to undertake specific tasks related to Travel and Transport issues, particularly in respect of travel to Golborne station.

### **Bus, cycling and pedestrian routes to Golborne Station**

- (i) To arrange a meeting with Dame Sarah Storey (GM cycling commissioner) and Andy for an inspection visit in March, and a meeting with local councillors and council officers. Graham has contacted GMCA (AB) and Dame Sarah's office on several occasions and is still awaiting confirmation of suitable date(s) post purdah.
  - (ii) To undertake an assessment of travel to consider: regular bus users, cyclists who use the local roads and pedestrians. Serendipitously, Stephen Riley (Wigan Council) invited Kath Houlton (Lowton East) to arrange for an initial scoping meeting with Liz Brown (LENDF), Linda Graham (LWR) and Graham Wardle (LaGTAC) 5<sup>th</sup> Feb.
- A report was sent to Steven Riley (19 Feb) - '**Some initial thoughts.....routes to the proposed Golborne station**' [5 documents]. Copies can be made available. There has been no feedback to date. Wigan Council officers have not as yet arranged to meet with the authors of the above document for further discussions.

### **3c. Completion of Atherleigh Way bypass extension to the M6**

A Working Group was established in Sept 2023 led by TfGM to look at financing of the bypass extension and options for the route of the bypass. The local community groups already have a 'Community Bypass Group' (CBG) which has been meeting since July 2023 with local Lowton East councillors. It is expected that these groups will meet for further discussions on progress along with GMCA, Highways England, DfT, local MPs Wigan Council officers and local councillors. A tentative meeting date had been set for March 2024, but is now (mainly due to purdah) likely to be mid-2024.

- James Grundy and Andy Burnham have recently had a successful meeting with the Roads Minister with reference to financing both the bypass extension and Golborne station.

At a recent LHSRG meeting (24<sup>th</sup> March) Stephen Riley (Wigan Council) confirmed the following (taken from the minutes of that meeting):

- There have been ongoing meetings between St. Helens, Warrington and Wigan Councils and James Grundy MP has been instrumental in raising the question of funding for the bypass in parliament. It has currently been passed to the Department for Transport and the question of using HS2 funding has been raised.
- TfGM are putting together a three-stage business case.
- From Wigan's point of view, they are supportive of the TFGM led scheme. It was generally felt that the Bypass had real momentum although these projects take years to come to fruition and cost a great deal of money.

In a letter to Wigan Council (July 2023) GW considered that it was essential that some discussions between Wigan Council officers, local ward councillors and Lowton East community groups take place early on to consider 'route options' based on local knowledge, and prior to any TfGM Working Group meetings. This offer to meet was turned down by the council.

### **3d. Wigan Local Plan (Traffic and Transport) and the Draft Wigan Transport Strategy.**

#### **Draft Wigan Transport Strategy.**

In the original draft transport strategy document, there was no mention of a proposed Atherleigh Way bypass extension even though it was significant to residents living in the Lowton-Golborne area and had been a key discussion issue for decades.

Graham, James Grundy MP and Edward Houlton wrote (Dec 2023) to Cllr Paul Prescott (Transport portfolio holder) requesting a meeting between Paul, Graham and interested parties. This was an important issue in respect of the Wigan Local Plan consultations in the upcoming months of 2024.

Nick Clarke kindly responded (20 Feb 2024) in which he stated that “...we are conscious of the need to get it resolved before too much longer. I have therefore asked for a programme setting out how and when that will be achieved so that we will have an adopted Wigan Transport Strategy within the next 6 months, subject to approval of the council’s Cabinet. Given the support for the bypass and its status as a scheme being advanced, we are intending to include content on it in the Transport Strategy”.

#### **Wigan Local Plan**

There has already been some contact between Wigan Council officers (Nick Clarke, etc), local residents and community groups in respect of the overall Wigan Local Plan. The community groups have already provided a ‘traffic issues’ document to the Wigan Local Plan Team that deals with specific traffic and transport issues. We eagerly await further information and discussion/consultation on their revised draft Wigan Local Plan towards the middle of 2024.

### **3e. Service Road (Newton Road) and modifications to A580 as part of S106 funding proposal**

Since local community residents were made aware of Wigan Council’s Major Infrastructure proposals ‘A580 road junction modifications’ in 2020 this scheme has been seen by local residents as one of the most contentious schemes proposed by Wigan Council in relation to road infrastructure. This would detrimentally affect traffic within the Lowton and Golborne boundary – particularly Lowton East (Lane Head). To date Wigan Council has refused to engage with the residents or community groups in any meaningful consultation – even if they say they have! A tick box exercise?

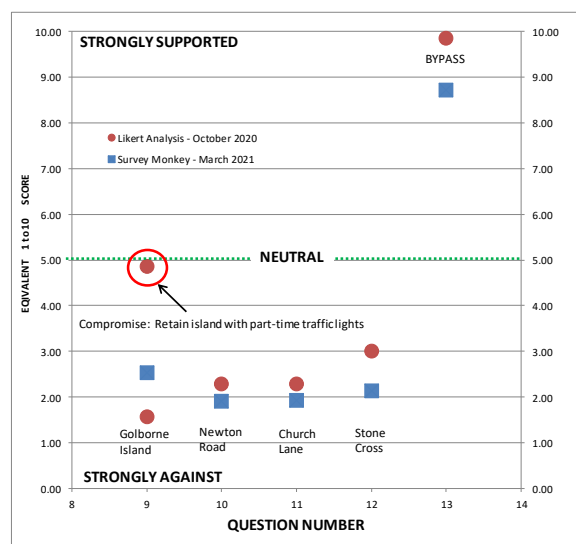
Following a meeting between Wigan Council and Community Groups in 2020 analysis and assessments by the community indicated that none of the Council’s proposed junction modifications were supported by the community. The bypass, which the community wanted, was not considered by them to be an option.

The following is taken from the community groups own survey and provided to Wigan Council:

**How strongly do you SUPPORT the following proposed ‘Road Infrastructure’ changes?**

Question #	A580 Junction Modifications 0 = Strongly Against, 10 = Strongly supported	Community Groups Survey (March 2021)	LaGTAC <i>et al</i> analysis (October 2020)
9	Replace Golborne island with a traffic controlled crossroad	2.53	1.57 (4.86)*
10	A580/A572 Newton Road Junction – adding new left turn from the A580 (southbound)	1.90	2.29
11	A580/B5207 Church Lane Junction – create new left turn for A580 to B5207 (northbound)	1.95	2.29
12	A580/Stone Cross Lane – widening Stone Cross Lane to create three lanes with an extra lane for turning right onto the A580 westbound towards Liverpool	2.13	3.00
13	Would you support the construction of a bypass (Atherleigh Way extension, or other) from the A580 to M6 thus alleviating pressure at Lane Head?	8.78	9.86

\* Note: When Golborne island was considered as a roundabout with part time traffic signals rather than removing the island and replacing it with a full time traffic light controlled crossroad junction the compromise score was 4.9 (Neutral).



**Scores for Questions 9 to 13**

Respondents to the community groups own survey commented that the Council’s own ‘have your say’ survey (both in March 2022) [i.e. “the consultation”] was biased, lacked clarity, explanation and visual plans- i.e. a not fit for purpose document.

Wigan Council's "consultation" with the community on Major Road infrastructure proposals was considered to be totally inadequate! Noting that in the Councils 'consultation survey' there were no truly relevant questions. Several reports prepared by the local community groups (LaGTAC, LENDF, LHSRG, LWR and G&LW 'Voice' were sent to Wigan Council providing clear and demonstrable evidence on a failure to consult!

- A report on 'Golborne and Lowton Infrastructure Assessment Options Appraisal Consultation 2020' [**LaGTAC-LENDF-LHSRG-LWRA-G&LWV-LE, 06 October 2020**] **9p**. Indicated a lack of support for the Council's proposed projects.
- The report 'A consideration of Wigan Council's Section 106 Funding 2022' [**LaG.S106.GW.V6F, 16 September 2022**] **30p**, emphasised the clear lack of effective communication with the Lowton and Golborne communities between 2013 and 2022.
- The report 'A consideration of Wigan Council's S106 funding consultation: A failure on Consultation Principles alone!' [**LaG.S106.Gunning.Con.Fail.GW, 24 October 2022**] **25p**. Indicated that there was a complete failure to comply with 'the 4 Gunning Principles' and that of 28 consultation criteria considered they failed on 75% of them. This report also showed that both the consultation and the council's 'have your say' residents survey were fatally flawed.
- Following the lack of meaningful engagement with the Community Groups a formal complaint was made to Wigan Council. [doc: **LaG.CGs.Complaint,GW. 24 April 2023**]. This and subsequent complaints were rejected as were the complaints made James Grundy MP, Lowton East councillors, and all residents affected by modifications to the S106 A580/Newton Road service road].
- The local community believes that Wigan Council have failed in providing any meaningful consultations and have clearly failed to comply with both the Gunning Principles and the Nolan Principles.
- Further actions, after further discussions with local affected residents, may be sought through the Local Government Ombudsman and Secretary of State for Local Government and Communities. Litigation against Wigan Council is always a potential option albeit expensive!
- NB. There is currently an outstanding action (2021) from the LTTPG Working Group in relation to S106 funding of road infrastructure projects. Andy Burnham had previously requested that Wigan Council meet with the community groups over this issue (see previous LTTPG minutes). This is also true of requests relating to weight limits on HGVs travelling though the village roads of Lowton and Golborne. Sadly, there has been no response to date!
- Wigan Council recently (Dec 2023) sent letters to residents on the Service Road affected at the A580/Newton Rd junction. According to Wigan Council officers this is only supposed to be a consultation on the details of this junction modification. Residents believe that once again it will not be a meaningful consultation!
- Letters of complaint were again sent to the Council clearly stating that the residents do not wish for this planned junction to go ahead. It does not mitigate under S106 rules and would

dramatically and deleteriously affect the health and wellbeing of those affected. It will have little benefit, if any, to the traffic situation within Lowton in comparison with the bypass extension scheme.

- Bizarrely, when the Atherleigh Way bypass extension goes ahead then these modifications to the A580 junctions as proposed by Wigan Council are not needed. Andy Burnham had intimated this at an earlier LTTPLG meeting!
- **A much-needed meeting is urgently needed between Wigan Council officers, the local community groups, local ward councillors and local MP James Grundy.**

NB. At the LHSRG meeting 18<sup>th</sup> March (again taken from their minutes)

**S106 MONIES:** Mr. Riley spoke of the Council's proposed highways improvement scheme at the junction of the A580/Newton Road.

- "A further stage of consultation with residents and stakeholders who are directly affected will take place in May."
- The detailed design process is being looked at with the least impact on residents.
- It is hoped that the new lane can be incorporated into the current lanes on the A580.
- A question was asked if this project could be cancelled, and the monies put to the Bypass. Mr. Riley replied that the cabinet has made a decision to go through with the Service Road changes and the final design will be available for everyone to have a say shortly via the public consultation.

It would appear that even though the S106 consultation has been shown to be a complete shambles and local residents do not want any of the suggested proposed junction modification to the A580 Wigan Council still want to proceed with these ill-considered plans!

**WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE! Issue that may be considered:**

The council has been considering changes to the A580 junctions for over a decade (since the **Infrastructure Assessment report of November 2013**), yet they still do not have a feasible plan available for the service road junction!

Is the community supposed to accept whatever they say as *a fait accompli*? If the Council wish for a sensible and meaningful consultation in May they need to:

- Provide a comprehensive set of detailed drawings with accompanying notes for the community to consider and review – at least 6 months ahead of any consultation.
- Provide an evidence-based assessment for what they propose, to include: detailed traffic flow and management assessments of all surrounding major roads as well as the junction by an independent assessor, and to allow time for these to be scrutinised by all interested parties (including the residents).
- To clearly show the significant benefits, if any, of what this change to the junction will bring.
- To provide an engineering critical flow analysis and timelines for the development.

- An assessment of the engineering work plans to consider closures to the A580 and surrounding roads and the effect of proposed building developments in the area over the same timeframe.

Also, the residents consider that the following questions need to be asked:

- Can the junction modification be made within the budget provided though S106 funding? if not, then why is it being considered as a S106 funding option? What is the estimated cost for the junction modification?
- Since 2020 when the S106 infrastructure projects were considered how much money has been spent to date on preparing plans for the A580/Newton Road junction?
- To explain why these modifications are needed, and what the benefits will be if the much-sought Atherleigh Way bypass is given the go-ahead. How much of our S106 money will have been wasted?

Quite frankly, is a May 2024 consultation viable?

### **3e. LaGTAC speed measurement procedure and GMP's Police Support Volunteer Community Speed Watch (CSW) scheme**

LaGTAC has been undertaking speed measurements on numerous roads within Lowton and Golborne since 2020 and feeding information back to the community, GMP traffic enforcement and to Wigan Council.

A LaGTAC survey of local residents' concerns indicated 49 speeding hotspots within Lowton and Golborne. LaGTAC members are working their way through speed measurements on the roads highlighted in the survey. LaGTAC will also undertake speed measurements for concerned residents at their request.

Results collected and analysed provide average speed measurements, 15<sup>th</sup> percentile and 85<sup>th</sup> percentiles, mean and standard deviations for free-flowing traffic. In addition, results are also collated for: cars, vans, LGV and HGVs, motorcycles and bicycles (not speed) showing the percentage of each vehicle type using that road. Graphs are provided showing the percentage of vehicles exceeding a given speed. The number of excessive speeders (%) – defined as (speed limit + 15mph) are identified for each road studied.

In 2021 a new Lowton and Golborne neighbourhood speed policing plan was to have been put together between GMP (Leigh) and LaGTAC. However, this was superseded when GMP took over the Community Speed Watch Scheme from Local Authorities within Greater Manchester.

This new GMP CSW scheme was opened to 'Police Support Volunteers', in March 2023 when applications for volunteers within the Wigan area were posted on the GMP website. To date two LENDF members have joined GMP-PSVs - working for them as volunteers (not employed by them). Two further LENDF members are currently being vetted and will be inducted as GMP-PSVs within a couple of months. More volunteers are needed!

LaGTAC speed measurement volunteers can only monitor traffic and have no powers of enforcement – only trained GMP enforcement officers have that power. However, as GMP-PSVs they may now have enforcement officers working alongside them.

The aim of the 'Community Speed Watch' is not to seek to chastise but to educate motorists to drive in a reasonable manner. We don't want any more deaths on our local roads, especially as a result of careless or dangerous driving. The principal aim is to reduce the number of excessively speeding motorists and make our roads safer. Excessive speeding must be challenged. However, LaGTAC has also been made increasing aware of vehicles being driven at unnecessarily slow speeds, presumably thinking driving slowly is safer (not necessarily the case!). For example, driving at 20mph in a 40mph zone not only uses 30-50% more fuel and is more polluting, it also often annoys and frustrates drivers leading to them taking more risks with overtaking etc. Please be mindful that such sluggish driving behaviour may result in a warning from the police, or a fixed price penalty notice (£100 - £200) for driving without due care and attention to road speed. In the extreme it could also be classified as 'careless' driving attracting a £5,000 fine and 9 points on their licence! All please be aware of the need to keep to considerate speeds when driving.

## **4. New Housing Developments**

### **Planning issues:**

The council and planners in 2013 were aware (from their own 'Golborne and Lowton Infrastructure Assessment (Nov 2013) document) that any further housing developments would lead to severe strain on infrastructure and lead to traffic congestion. [Sections: 3.13.1, 13.3.2, 13.3.3 ,3.13.5] **"...proposals taken in isolation will not impact severely on the local transport network, the cumulative impact of the full 1000 homes could be, and is likely to be, severe, given the overall scale of development and the existing congestion issues in Golborne and Lowton."**

In the same report under Section 3.13 they state:

- **Congestion reduction and management is one of the key priorities for Wigan Council"**. [3.13.1]
- **"..there are congestion issues on the highway network in Golborne and Lowton"** [13.13.2].
- **"surveys validated traffic issues and quantified the current levels of peak hour congestion and queuing at a number of the key junctions."** [13.3.3]
- **"the data demonstrates that wherever development is accommodated it will adversely affect the junctions listed above, and particularly junctions along the A580 East Lancashire Road"**. [ 3.13.5]
- **Yet, since 2015, planning permission has been given for hundreds of houses when it had previously been established by Wigan Council that these developments will have a severe impact on traffic congestion within Lowton and Golborne!**

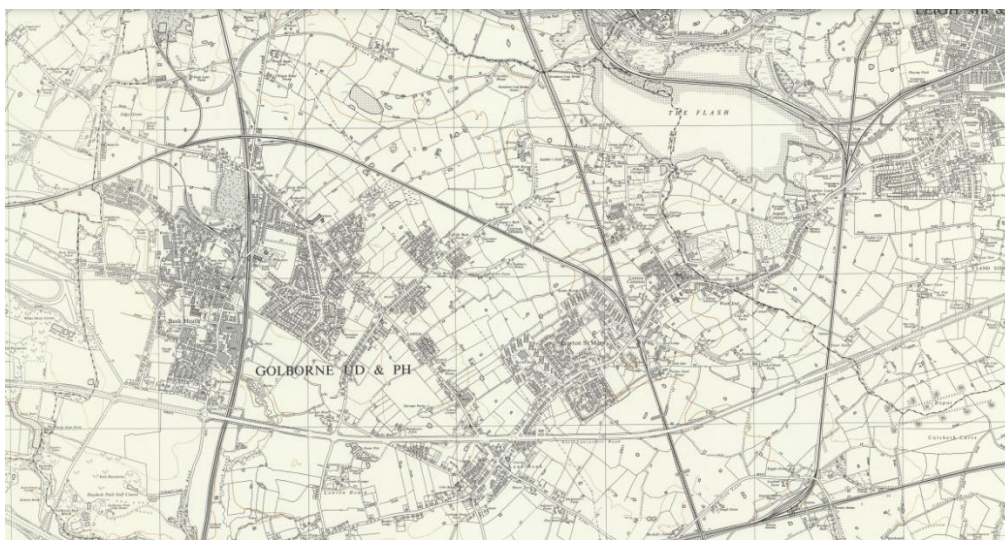
In 2020 LaGTAC, with the support of LENDF, LHSRG, LWR and G&LW 'Voice', local councillors and our local MP James Grundy, formally wrote to Wigan Council requesting that there was a moratorium on any further housing and commercial development until after the local road infrastructure had been improved, and that there were talks between Wigan Council and the local Lowton and Golborne community groups and residents. This was refused.



It was also suggested to Wigan Council that an oversight committee be established between Wigan Council, the developers, community groups and other interested parties at the start of any planning application. This was ignored, as were any suggestions of any formal consultations with the residents or their peer community groups. This lack of meaningful consultation continues!

**ITEM 1. Changes in Lowton and Golborne Housing from 1965 to 2019**

In 2020 LaGTAC looked at the huge increase in housing and commercial development within Lowton and Golborne wards over the last 50 years by comparing an ordinance survey map from 1965 (Fig 1) with a satellite image taken in 2019 for the same area (Fig 2). Figure 3 shows the massive change in land use for building with no significant changes in the road infrastructure over the same period.

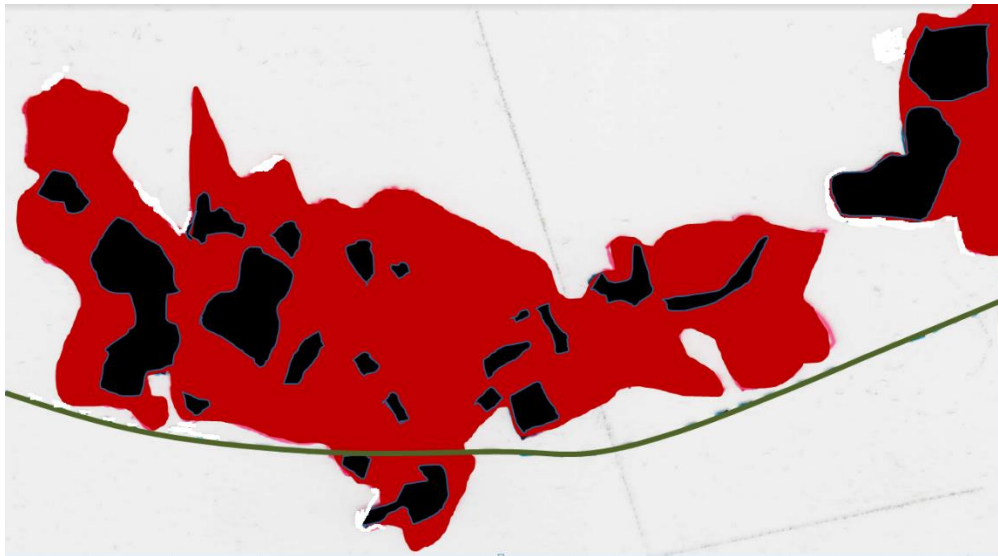


**Fig 1. Lowton and Golborne Housing 1965**



**Fig 2. Lowton and Golborne - housing and commercial development in 2019**

What is clearly shown is the despoilation of the village characteristics by huge over-development of the area until there are almost no green spaces left within the Lowton East and Golborne & Lowton West wards. **Wigan Council still want to have more housing development in the area!**



**Fig 3. Changes in Lowton and Golborne Housing Density: 1965 Black 2019 Red  
(Approximate fourfold increase) excluding the developments from 2019 to 2023**

**[NB East Lancs A580 West to East shown in Green]**

Arguments against further development of the Lowton-Golborne area were made in a report sent to the council planning committee, directors and the executive board in 2020. This has been cited in all local planning objections for proposed developments since 2020. Have they even read it? They seemingly never refer to any of the specific arguments and objections made. [Ref: 'LaGTAG: Objectors report – Bloor Homes development of 69 dwellings (Phase 3) Heath Lane, Lowton' [LaGTAC Report Reference: A/19/88228/MAJOR- OBJ/150520 (May 2020) draft] 54p.

**Q. What is the way forward for the Lowton and Golborne community to challenge Wigan Councils diktat?**